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LETTER DATED 6 MARCH 2000 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF ETHIOPIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT
OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, issued on 4 March 2000, entitled "Ethiopia vindicated" (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Duri MOHAMMED
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

ETHIOPIA VINDICATED

Statement issued on 4 March 2000 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

The tragic conflict we are in today was caused by the flagrant violation of Ethiopia's sovereignty by the aggressors at Asmara. Had they refrained from pursuing their aggressive policies against their neighbours, no conflict would have erupted, and there would have been no need to engage in a peace process. No amount of sophistry can change the fact that it is the crime of aggression committed by the leaders at Asmara that has precipitated the crisis and that the peace efforts launched since the invasion of May 1998 have all concentrated on minimizing the damage caused by that crime.

It is with the view to minimizing the damage caused by Eritrea's aggression that Ethiopia has engaged in the peace process. Ethiopia has accepted the Framework Agreement and the modalities for its implementation, which are based on the international law principle of a return to the status quo ante to peacefully resolve conflicts. The two documents were also endorsed by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit at Algiers. Eritrea belatedly declared its acceptance of the two basic documents. It would appear therefore that the basic peace plan has been in place for some time and is still on the table.

All that remained to finalize the process was to design an implementation plan. Ethiopia was and is of the opinion that the implementation plan, which has been termed the Technical Arrangements, should be worked out through consultation and dialogue. It did not and could not have agreed to a process whereby the implementation plan would be presented on a take-it-or-leave-it basis even before meaningful dialogue and negotiation on its contents had been made.

When Ethiopia was given the Technical Arrangements, it pointed out the clear inconsistencies between the implementation plan, which was the Technical Arrangements, and the peace plan endorsed by the OAU summit at Algiers. It also pointed out the lack of clarity of certain provisions and called for the strict adherence to the principle of the return to the status quo ante on which the OAU peace plan is based.

OAU and its current Chairman have been striving in good faith to work out a peace implementation plan that is clear and consistent with the peace plan endorsed at Algiers and with the principle of the return to the status quo ante on which the OAU peace plan is based. Ethiopia has been actively engaged in a constructive dialogue with OAU and its peace partners. Significant progress has been made in the dialogue, particularly during the recent visit of the Special Envoy of the current Chairman of the OAU and the Special Envoy of the President of the United States of America.

True to form, the Eritrean Government has endeavoured to scuttle the promising efforts of OAU and its partners. The true colours of the Government at Asmara, which committed the crime of aggression and continues to subvert efforts to peacefully resolve the crisis created by the crime it committed, have once again been exposed. As soon as truly meaningful steps towards peace are taken, the leadership at Asmara balks!

Ethiopia has all along insisted that the aggressors at Asmara have no interest in peace. Their recent conduct in the peace process is ample vindication of Ethiopia's position. It is also in this same spirit that Ethiopia, as always, will continue to cooperate fully with our continental organization and with its current Chairman and with those who support OAU and its efforts for peace.
